

## Swings by peridottie

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**Genre:** Byeler - Freeform, M/M, THE SEQUEL TO GLOVES, byler, i hope yall enjoy

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**Summary:**

A year after they went to the ice skating rink, the boys have grown up. And now they feel ready to face their feelings.

## Swings

### Author's Note:

HI EVERYONE

it's been over a year, but i finally did it. another byeler fic!!! the support i've gotten (and continue to get) for Gloves just means the world to me, and I really wanted to give back. I hope you all like this one just as much!

“Here—Will, come here!”

Mike reached out and took Will by the wrist. Will flinched, twisted, and turned to look at Mike. His stomach flipped.

It was the tail end of 1984, the very day before Christmas break. Mike's pale face was illuminated by the sun reflecting off the thin layer of snow already turned slushy and speckled with dirt and pine needles. Mike had changed a lot in a year, Will noted for the umpteenth time. His jaw was more pronounced, his hair more voluminous, all of his face looking less kiddish and more like a teenager. An awkward teenager, sure, with his sloped nose and wide smile, but a teenager nonetheless. Will still felt like he looked like a little kid, a heya-mister-would-ya-like-a-lollipop little kid. Mike was grown-up, in Will's eyes. Handsome, even. Not just cute. Handsome.

“Yeah?” Will said gently. He could barely see the frostiness of his breath.

“Come on, I wanna show you something.”

“What is it? The bell rang!”

“So?”

The small brunet looked around. His classmates were starting to shuffle towards their classes, looking like flocks of penguins in oversized, bright blue and forest green snow jackets.

“So we have to go to class,” Will tried.

Mike smiled, almost crazily. “Let’s skip. No, it’s fine, really—“ he had cut Will off from trying to talk, “—Your phone’s broken, remember? Even if the school calls, your mom won’t know. And so what if she does find out? It’s last period! And we’re about to go on Christmas break!”

Will looked at Mike in silent awe, now aware of how wrapped up in his own delusional delinquency Mike was. “Yeah, no, you’re crazy.” He started to walk towards the classrooms again, but Mike grabbed his arm and held it tight. When Will looked around, Mike’s face was set.

“We’re going.”

Will was, to put it gently, so terrified he felt like vomiting. “M-Maybe I won’t get in a lot of trouble if we’re caught,” he whispered. Mike didn’t appear to be listening as he led Will towards the grass. “But you’ve gotten in t-trouble enough this year, your parents’ll kill you. Mike? Mike, are you even listening to m—“

Mike dragged Will behind one of the school buildings, shushing him and pulling them both behind a bush before crouching down. Their backs were against the school wall, its brick slippery with snow, and to their right was the school fence. Will turned slowly to Mike, who was smiling sheepishly.

“Cool hiding spot, right?” he asked. Will nodded in silence, and looked at his own hands blankly. Mike bit the inside of his cheek and looked sideways at the smaller boy, then heaved a sigh. “Hey, come on, I’m sorry,” he murmured as he snaked a hand around Will’s shoulders. “I just really wanted to show you something. If we get caught, I’ll take the heat, okay? You can blame me all you want.”

Will finally looked back up at Mike. His eyes were so sincere, and he was so *dorky* looking, Will cracked a smile and laughed. Mike first looked relieved, and then started to laugh, too, smacking Will’s shoulder and rocking a little.

That’s when Will noticed how close they were.

He was pressed right against Mike's side, with his head nearly in the crook of Mike's neck. He could feel Mike's breath against his cheek and neck when Mike laughed.

Panic struck Will so hard he scrambled to move away from Mike fast. So fast, in fact, he lost balance in his crouched position on the snow-slickened grass and lost balance. Mike fell with him, his long and ridiculously gangly legs kicking and sending a sheet of snow spraying from his heel when he fell onto the seat of his pants.

"Ah, shit!" he cried. He struggled to stand back up. "Will!" But he was still laughing, and the sound was so warm and pleasant Will was too paralyzed to get up. Mike took his hand, hoisting him to his feet.

"You okay?"

Will got a strange sense of Déjà Vu.

He nodded, and Mike smiled. The taller boy looked out, then Will followed. The schoolyard was silent. Empty. Nothing but snow was covering the normally packed grounds. It was peaceful, but a little strange. A little... sad. A little lonely, if not for Mike.

"I think the coast's clear," Mike said finally, his face set once again. "Let's go."

He brushed his pants of snow, then hopped over the fence with ease (it was only about waist height), while Will made some effort to climb over and nearly fell again before Mike caught him. "Smooth," he joked.

The pair walked in silence. Will was looking anxiously around, still pressed against Mike, but the air was dead. Everyone was at school, while their dads were at work, and their moms were inside with the radio tuned into the Christmas station while they cleaned up after their kids and husbands and had their own little nuclear families perfectly intact, even after the news about Hawkins broke. Will and Mike weren't so lucky.

"The woods," Mike said, stopping. "Let's go through the woods." He walked forward, towards the thick clump of trees ahead, while Will

stayed. “Hey, aren’t you coming?”

Will finally willed his feet to move, and sighed when he caught up with Mike. He was dangerous.

Not dangerous in a physically harming way, it wasn’t like he would ever purposefully hurt Will. But Will was just so helplessly in love with him, he would do almost anything for Mike if he asked. That’s exactly what he was doing now, and he hated it. Maybe it was just because he was so normally pushed around, but Will had that special inclination towards Mike. At least he wasn’t as bad as Eleven, he supposed.

Mike had actually begun to shy away from Eleven, in the smallest way. Only because he felt awful that she was so attached to him. She would do anything for Mike, but not in the good way. She took things literally; she would jump off a cliff if Mike told her to. Mike always had to be careful, he didn’t want El to blindly follow him like a dog and do the bad things he did.

Maybe that’s why he rebelled.

Maybe he wanted someone who would stop him. If his parents wouldn’t, and his sister was always gone, and Eleven followed no matter what, who would?

Will clenched his jaw so it wouldn’t chatter. He was a little nervous. They could get lost, or maybe he would have another flashback from the cold or being in the woods again. But Mike was there, so he wasn’t that nervous. With Mike, Will knew he would be alright.

“How often do you do this, Mike?” Will finally asked. Mike shrugged.

“Not that much,” he answered. “Not enough to really be noticed, anyway. Why are you so worried about me?”

“I—I dunno.” The smaller boy looked down with his lips pressed together. “You’re always worried about me, so...”

Mike laughed a little and kicked the snow as he walked. “Well, duh,” he said. “After everything that’s happened? I would be crazy not to. But I know you’re not weak. I try not to baby you. Unlike *someone* I

know..."

Will snickered and looked up at Mike, fondness growing in his eyes. "Guess I'll just let you get yourself killed."

"Thank you!"

The two walked a little farther, still pressed close together, until they breeched the edge of the woods and came out the other side. Facing them was their old elementary school—the back of it, anyway—which was similarly abandoned as the middle school was.

"What... Why are we here?" Mike just smiled and took Will's hand

(oh god he's holding my hand holy shit)

in order to lead him towards the playground.

"Before you ask," the taller boy interjected, "The elementary school is already on break, *and* this playground is public. And we're the public."

Will sighed and cracked another smile. "How long have you been planning this?" he asked. Mike just winked playfully and kept walking towards the playground.

The snow and tan bark crunched as they walked across the park. They passed a blue slide, which Will ran his icy fingers along absentmindedly. Mike walked around the monkey bars and spun around once on a pole as he did so. That's when Will noticed they were on a straight path towards the swingset. But not just a swingset, *the* swingset. Where he and Mike first met.

"Why...?" he squeaked, and Mike looked back, a bit sheepishly. He said nothing and sat Will down on one of the swings, before taking the one next to it. Will shifted uncomfortably; the seats seemed to have gotten a lot smaller since he'd grown up.

"The swings?" he asked. "You took me out of school to show me the swings?"

"Not *any* swings," Mike tried with a shrug. "The ones... The ones we

met on. Look to your right.”

Will obliged, confused, and gasped gently. On one of the supporting poles of the swingset, in shaky, scrawled handwriting Will knew all too well to be Mike’s, was written in black Sharpie; “SIDE BY SIDE FROM THE BEGINNING ‘TILL WE DIE. M.W & W.B”

Will immediately felt a lump rise in his throat, blinking quickly as he tried to swallow it. His hands held the chains of the swing in a tight, cold grip. M.W & W.B. It wasn’t M.W + W.B, with a heart and arrow drawn around it, but it felt the same. It felt like the closest he would get to that with Mike.

He slowly looked around towards the other boy, his crush, his love, and opened and closed his mouth helplessly. “Mike, I...” he managed.

Mike smiled, embarrassed, and looked down at his halfheartedly-swinging feet. “I... It kinda feels lame now,” he whispered. “But I hope you like it. From bathroom stalls to swingsets. Pretty big upgrade, huh?”

Will laughed and sniffed, wiping his red nose with his sleeve. “It’s not lame,” he managed. “It’s cool. Thanks a bunch, Mike.” He saw Mike’s hand was resting on his own bouncing knee, and bit his lip, remembering the time Mike steadied his shaking hand. Will leaned forward and put his hand on Mike’s, which made the black-haired boy look into Will’s uncertain eyes.

“I’m glad you think so,” he mumbled, hiding most of the nervousness in his voice, but not all of it. He tentatively slipped his hand into Will’s so he was holding it properly. Both boys looked to the ground in embarrassed silence.

Will was trying to keep his breathing steady, but it was proving difficult. Mike’s hand was freezing, just like Will’s, but it didn’t matter. It felt so nice to just hold it, for both of them to be connected and aware of each other and *alive*. Will wanted more. He didn’t know exactly what, but just more of that warm, happy feeling.

Will’s thoughts were interrupted by a *click*. He didn’t look up at first, but the sound continued. *click, click, click*.

The shorter boy finally raised his head, and his eyes widened. Mike was flicking open and closed a Zippo lighter. Open, look at the flame, close.

“Mike!” Will exclaimed. “Why do you have that?? Are... Are you—“

“Smoking?” Mike interrupted. “No. Of course not, Will, Jesus! I just took it from my dad. He doesn’t use it. And maybe it’ll come in handy at some point.” He passed it towards Will, who took it hesitantly. “Doesn’t bite,” Mike continued.

Will flicked the lighter open, and watched the flame. Both of them did, silent, the fire reflecting in their eyes. Almost too heavy-handed a metaphor.

After a few more seconds, Will closed it and passed it back to Mike. “Pyro,” he jeered.

Mike laughed and stuffed the lighter back in his coat pocket. “Yeah, right,” he said.

They were still holding hands.

“Will, I um...” Mike began, then swallowed. “I really appreciate that you’re looking out for me. Sometimes it feels like nobody else really cares, you know? Like...”

“Like you’re invisible?” Will tried. Mike nodded, and Will smiled a little. “That must be nice. Do you wanna trade places?”

Mike chuckled, exhaling through his nose and smiling over at Will. “Sure,” he joked. “Who doesn’t want to be called zombie boy?”

Both boys laughed, then went silent. Will bit the inside of his cheek and looked longingly at Mike, whose eyes seemed to soften and return the look.

In a dreamlike sequence, Mike reached out and grabbed one of the chains on Will’s swing and used his own feet to push himself sideways. He pulled Will towards him and stared for just a second before closing his eyes and leaning forward to press an experimental kiss to the corner of Will’s mouth.



The taller boy pulled away only slightly, his eyes darting about Will's face to try and read his expression. Will grabbed Mike by the sleeve, simply out of shock, as a way to ground himself, but maybe it had an underlying meaning, too. An invitation. Mike leaned in again, and this time he pressed his chapped, cold lips against Will's and squeezed his hand.

It was relatively quick, but Will still took a long time to open his eyes. His stomach had exploded into butterflies, and his hand was shaking. That's why Mike had squeezed it. He didn't get a chance to say anything before Mike pulled him into a hug and clung to him, letting out a shuddering breath. They stayed like that, for a long time, and Will was finally content. He had that closeness, the warm and fuzzy feeling, and it was so good. He hadn't felt that good since before the Upside Down, or maybe ever. And for once, he wasn't scared. He wasn't scared to love Mike Wheeler. Moments like that didn't—and never would—come often again.

"Hey," Mike finally whispered. He pulled away from Will, who still clung to Mike's sleeves. "School should be out. Do you... Do you wanna go to my house? We can hang out in the basement and turn on the heater and—" he shrugged sheepishly, "—I dunno, hang out."

Will smiled. He leaned his head on Mike's shoulder, and mustered the courage to kiss his cheek. "Yeah," he squeaked, clearing his throat afterwards. "Yeah. That sounds nice. I'm freezing, anyways." Mike grinned his wide grin and stood up, leading Will by the hand again away from the playground and the swingset with its graffiti, and the monkey bars, and the blue slide, and back past all the houses and their nuclear families who were blindly unaware of the two boys in love walking by their snow-covered lawns.